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Security Breach Prompts Lockdown of Montana State Prison

DEER LODGE – On Wednesday Dec. 21, 2005 at about 11:45 a.m., Montana State Prison correctional officers performing a random search of a high-security housing unit found a significant building security breach.

As a result, the prison went into emergency lockdown of all inmates as allowed under Department of Corrections and prison policies. The security breach is currently under investigation by department investigators and prison staff.

Warden Mike Mahoney said the lockdown will remain in effect until it has been determined that the facility is secure for the safety of the staff, inmates and public.

During this time period, inmate movement within the prison is very limited, and both inmate visiting and inmate phone calls are suspended. The duration of the lockdown will depend on progress made in the investigation into the security breach and on inmate behavior, Mahoney said.

Mahoney praised the work of the prison staff, in particular the inter-perimeter security team, security Maj. Tom Wood and Deputy Warden Ross Swanson for their management of this incident.

Mahoney said no additional information will be released Wednesday related to the security breach because it could jeopardize the overall security of the facility, as well as the ongoing investigation.

Another update will be provided Thursday, Dec. 22, with any additional information that may be available.